

Department of Veterans Affairs

§ 1.931

Attorney General, the authority to accept the compromise rests with the Department of Justice (DOJ). If VA receives an offer to compromise any debt in excess of \$100,000, VA should evaluate the compromise offer using the same factors as set forth in § 1.931 of this part. If VA believes the offer has merit, it shall refer the debt to the Civil Division or other appropriate division in DOJ using a Claims Collection Litigation Report (CCLR). The referral shall include appropriate financial information and a recommendation for the acceptance of the compromise offer. DOJ approval is not required if VA decides to reject a compromise offer.

(c) The \$100,000 limit in paragraph (b) of this section does not apply to debts that arise out of participation in a VA loan program under Chapter 37 of Title 38 of the U.S. Code. VA has unlimited authority to compromise debts arising out of participation in a Chapter 37 loan program, regardless of the amount of the debt.

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3711; 38 U.S.C 501, 3720)
[69 FR 62198, Oct. 25, 2004]

§ 1.931 Bases for compromise.

(a) VA may compromise a debt if it cannot collect the full amount because:

(1) The debtor is unable to pay the full amount in a reasonable time, as verified through credit reports or other financial information;

(2) VA is unable to collect the debt in full within a reasonable time by enforced collection proceedings;

(3) The cost of collecting the debt does not justify the enforced collection of the full amount; or

(4) There is significant doubt concerning VA's ability to prove its case in court.

(b) In determining the debtor's inability to pay, VA will consider relevant factors such as the following:

(1) Age and health of the debtor;

(2) Present and potential income;

(3) Inheritance prospects;

(4) The possibility that assets have been concealed or improperly transferred by the debtor; and

(5) The availability of assets or income that may be realized by enforced collection proceedings.

(c) VA will verify the debtor's claim of inability to pay by using a credit report and other financial information as provided in paragraph (g) of this section. VA should consider the applicable exemptions available to the debtor under State and Federal law in determining the ability to enforce collection. VA also may consider uncertainty as to the price that collateral or other property will bring at a forced sale in determining the ability to enforce collection. A compromise effected under this section should be for an amount that bears a reasonable relation to the amount that can be recovered by enforced collection procedures, with regard to the exemptions available to the debtor and the time that collection will take.

(d) If there is significant doubt concerning VA's ability to prove its case in court for the full amount claimed, either because of the legal issues involved or because of a bona fide dispute as to the facts, then the amount accepted in compromise of such cases should fairly reflect the probabilities of successful prosecution to judgment, with due regard given to the availability of witnesses and other evidentiary support for VA's claim. In determining the risks involved in litigation, VA will consider the probable amount of court costs and attorney fees pursuant to the Equal Access to Justice Act, 28 U.S.C. 2412, that may be imposed against the Government if it is unsuccessful in litigation.

(e) VA may compromise a debt if the cost of collecting the debt does not justify the enforced collection of the full amount. The amount accepted in compromise in such cases may reflect an appropriate discount for the administrative and litigative costs of collection, with consideration given to the time it will take to effect collection. Collection costs may be a substantial factor in the settlement of small debts. In determining whether the cost of collecting justifies enforced collection of the full amount, VA will consider whether continued collection of the debt, regardless of cost, is necessary to further an enforcement principle.

(f) VA generally will not accept compromises payable in installments. If, however, payment of a compromise in

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installments is necessary, VA will obtain a legally enforceable written agreement providing that, in the event of default, the full original principal balance of the debt prior to compromise, less sums paid thereon, is reinstated. Whenever possible, VA will also obtain security for repayment.

(g) To assess the merits of a compromise offer based in whole or in part on the debtor's inability to pay the full amount of a debt within a reasonable time, VA will obtain a current financial statement from the debtor showing the debtor's assets, liabilities, income, and expenses. Agencies also may obtain credit reports or other financial information to assess compromise offers.

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3711; 38 U.S.C. 501, 3720)
[69 FR 62198, Oct. 25, 2004]

§ 1.932 Enforcement policy.

VA may compromise statutory penalties, forfeitures, or claims established as an aid to enforcement and to compel compliance, if VA's enforcement policy in terms of deterrence and securing compliance, present and future, will be adequately served by VA's acceptance of the sum to be agreed upon.

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3711; 38 U.S.C. 501, 3720)
[69 FR 62198, Oct. 25, 2004]

§ 1.933 Joint and several liability.

(a) When two or more debtors are jointly and severally liable, VA will pursue collection activity against all debtors, as appropriate. VA will not attempt to allocate the burden of payment between the debtors but should proceed to liquidate the indebtedness as quickly as possible.

(b) VA will ensure that a compromise agreement with one debtor does not release VA's claim against the remaining debtors. The amount of a compromise with one debtor shall not be considered a precedent or binding in determining the amount that will be required from other debtors jointly and severally liable on the claim.

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3711; 38 U.S.C. 501, 3720)
[69 FR 62198, Oct. 25, 2004]

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§ 1.934 Further review of compromise offers.

If VA is uncertain whether to accept a firm, written, substantive compromise offer on a debt that is within its delegated compromise authority, it may refer the offer to VA General Counsel or Regional Counsel or to the Civil Division or other appropriate division in the Department of Justice (DOJ), using a Claims Collection Litigation Report (CCLR) accompanied by supporting data and particulars concerning the debt. DOJ may act upon such an offer or return it to the agency with instructions or advice.

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3711; 38 U.S.C. 501, 3720)
[69 FR 62198, Oct. 25, 2004]

§ 1.935 Consideration of tax consequences to the Government.

In negotiating a compromise, VA will consider the tax consequences to the Government. In particular, VA will consider requiring a waiver of tax-loss-carry-forward and tax-loss-carry-back rights of the debtor.

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3711; 38 U.S.C. 501, 3720)
[69 FR 62198, Oct. 25, 2004]

§ 1.936 Mutual releases of the debtor and VA.

In all appropriate instances, a compromise that is accepted by VA shall be implemented by means of a mutual release, in which the debtor is released from further non-tax liability on the compromised debt in consideration of payment in full of the compromise amount, and VA and its officials, past and present, are released and discharged from any and all claims and causes of action that the debtor may have arising from the same transaction. In the event a mutual release is not executed when a debt is compromised, unless prohibited by law, the debtor is still deemed to have waived any and all claims and causes of action against VA and its officials related to the transaction giving rise to the compromised debt.

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3711; 38 U.S.C. 501, 3720)
[69 FR 62198, Oct. 25, 2004]